



**LEICESTER
PRINT WORKSHOP**
printmaking central

Troubleshooting when screenprinting

Image is not washing out completely after you have exposed the screen

This problem normally occurs when the screen has been coated and has dried but light has contaminated the screen before it was exposed. Strip the screen and start again.

It can also occur if you are printing particularly fine imagery on an incorrect mesh or if the exposure time is too long. Ensure you are using a 120T mesh for extra fine imagery and the correct exposure time.

Lines appear in the emulsion when you are coating the screen

The blade of the coating trough must be dirty or damaged. Look along the edge of the trough and you will see small nicks or flecks dried emulsion if the blade has not been cleaned properly. Use the finest, wet and dry sandpaper to clean the edge of the blade. Most troughs are made of aluminium meaning they are soft and vulnerable to damage.

Parts of the emulsion lift and wash away when rinsing the screen after exposure

This occurs when the screen has not been coated evenly, leaving thick areas of emulsion. Wash off and start again. The emulsion should go on evenly in one coat on the flat side of the screen.

Ink is drying in the screen

If the ink is drying in the screen as you print and affecting the quality of the print, take it to the washout booth, give it a good rinse and start again. This is caused by mixing too much ink in with the print medium. It can also be caused by leaving the screen to dry between prints instead of flooding, or taking too long. Mix a small amount of retarder in with the ink and medium to lower the risk of this happening. White ink often seems to dry more quickly than the other pigments, therefore if you are using white or mixing a pastel colour, ensure you do use retarder.

Excessive staining of the mesh after printing

This is normally caused by mixing too much ink in with the print medium. Flooding your screen between prints will lower the risk of this happening.

Spraying Mr Muscle onto the screen where any small sections of ink have dried into the screen will normally dislodge the ink without requiring you to strip the screen. Then rinse the screen thoroughly. Never pull pure ink through the screen without it being mixed with medium. It will block the screen within seconds.

Too much ink is getting through the screen and the image is 'bleeding' at its edges

This could be down to the angle of your squeegee. Ensure you are using it at approx a 45° angle.

You may have mixed too much medium with your ink.

Only pull ink through the screen once, pulling it more than once will put too much ink through the screen causing this problem.

To remedy this – clean the excess ink from your screen and squeegee. Pull your squeegee over your image without any extra ink, onto a sheet of newsprint. Do this over and over again, refreshing the newsprint each time, until no excess ink appears on the newsprint. This should take 3 or 4 pulls maximum and you should take care to do this quickly so the screen does not dry. Alternatively, rinse your screen in the wash out and start again.

Image sticking to the back of the screen after printing

This normally occurs if the printed area is the same size as your paper, or if you have a large expanse of ink and not much of a border on your paper. To remedy this use larger paper, or be aware of the problem and ensure you pull the paper off the screen before your flood print. If you are using a vacuum bed, place newsprint over the exposed air holes and this should focus the air to your print area and hold the paper in place.